In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A communications system comprising:

a first teleport station;

a first user terminal;

a satellite coupling the first teleport station to the first user terminal; and

a network access point coupled to the Internet and the first teleport station, said network access point coupled to the first teleport station through an optical fiber.

2. (Original) A communications system as recited in claim 1, wherein said satellite comprises a satellite in the Ka band.

3. (Original) A communications system as recited in claim 1, further comprising a second teleport station coupled to the first teleport station through said satellite.

4. (Previously Presented) A communications system comprising:

a satellite;

a first teleport station;

an optical fiber network;

a second teleport station coupled to the first teleport station through said optical fiber network and said satellite;

said optical fiber network providing a primary communication link until an irregularity is detected in said optical fiber, where, upon the sensing of the irregularity, routing the communication from said first teleport station to said second teleport station through said satellite.

5. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating between a first user terminal and a first geographic region served by a first satellite and a second user terminal in a second geographic region comprises the steps of:

directing a communication from a first user terminal to the first satellite;

routing the communication from the first satellite to a first teleport station;

routing the communication from the first teleport station to a second teleport station in the second geographic region by way of an optical fiber network; and

routing the communication from the second teleport station to a second user terminal in the second geographic region.

6. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the step of routing communication from the second teleport station comprises directing the communication from the second teleport station to the second user terminal by way of an optical fiber.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the step of routing communication from the second teleport station comprises directing the communication from the second teleport station to the second user terminal by way of a second satellite.

8. (Original) A method as recited in claim 5, further comprising the step of coupling the first teleport station to the Internet.

9. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a communications system comprising the steps of:

generating a plurality of spot beams directed to a respective plurality of teleport stations from a satellite;

interconnecting the plurality of teleport stations with an optical communication network;

in normal operating conditions, directing a communication from a first of said plurality of teleport stations through said satellite to a first user terminal; and

when the second teleport station is encumbered, directing the communication through an optical link.

10. (Original) A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising the step of connecting the optical communication network to the Internet.